



# Illinois Route 159 Newsletter

Volume 1 Winter 2006

This is the first newsletter for the IL Route 159 project through Collinsville, Illinois. IDOT appreciates your continued interest and participation as the study develops. Please visit the project website for continuous updates throughout the project: [www.dot.il.gov/ilroute159](http://www.dot.il.gov/ilroute159)

## Why is this improvement needed?

The improvement to IL Route 159 is necessary to improve the safety and capacity of the route. The traffic volumes on existing IL Route 159 have exceeded the amount that can safely and efficiently utilize the existing roadway. A high accident location has been identified on IL Route 159 from Spring Avenue to Johnson Street. This study will evaluate improvements to the roadway and major intersections to improve the safety and efficient movement of traffic through Collinsville. These improvements will be balanced with the input of the residents, business owners, and users (stakeholders) of the route. Some of the positive feedback received to date includes; residents are pleased with IDOT's goal to improve safety and mobility, businesses see roadway improvements having a positive impact on Collinsville's economic vitality, and overall the public has been pleased with the public involvement effort. Some of the concerns raised to date include **impacts** to homes, **impacts** to businesses and residents, **impacts** to churches, **impacts** to trees, and **impacts** to the downtown area as a whole.

## What is the scope of this project?

IDOT's scope for this project is to improve the existing IL Route 159 roadway to facilitate the safe and efficient flow of traffic through the City of Collinsville. To improve the safety and efficiency of the roadway, it is anticipated that additional through lanes will be required and possibly additional turn lanes at the intersections. Due to the limited existing right of way and proximity of homes, businesses, and churches, this will be a very challenging project.

To accomplish this project, IDOT is implementing an approach to public involvement consistent with their Context Sensitive Solutions guidelines. These guidelines were established to ensure a high level of public involvement in the project study process. It is important to note that this project is not evaluating



bypasses around the City of Collinsville. Alternatives considered and discussed as part of this project are referring to improvements along the existing alignment.

## What are the limits of this project?

IL Route 159 is currently being studied for improvements from South Morrison Street (just south of the Catsup Bottle) to Interstate 55/70. This segment of roadway has been broken into two-2 projects. The first project is from Belt Line Road to Interstate 55/70. That project will consist of resurfacing and intersection improvements. The second project is the focus of *this* study and the public involvement efforts. Its limits are from South Morrison north to Belt Line Road. This project will be a comprehensive study of the traffic, safety, and environment to develop alternatives for the improvement of existing IL Route 159.

## What is the project schedule? / When will construction begin?

IDOT plans, designs, and constructs projects in three phases. Phase I is the preliminary design and environmental study of the project, Phase II is the preparation of the final design and construction bid documents, and Phase III is the actual construction of the project. The project team's goal is to complete Phase I in 36 months. This process started in August of

2005. It is estimated that Phase II will require approximately 24 months and Phase III will require approximately 36 months. A better estimate of the length of time required for Phases II and III can be prepared after Phase I is complete.

Land acquisition can begin after the Phase I report has been approved, but it has not been funded. Construction (Phase III) is not currently funded and cannot begin until that funding is in place.

## Context Sensitive Solutions

Due to the challenging and sensitive nature of making a roadway improvement to IL Route 159 through an urban area like Collinsville, IDOT has elected to utilize their Context Sensitive Solution Guidelines for this project. What are Context Sensitive Solutions guidelines? Context Sensitive Solutions is an interdisciplinary approach that seeks effective, multi-modal transportation solutions by working with stakeholders to develop, build, and maintain cost effective transportation facilities which fit into the project's surroundings, its "context". While this definition may seem complicated, the most important facet to the public should be that IDOT will be trying to work with the community as a whole to develop a solution to the congestion and safety problems currently associated with IL Route 159 in Collinsville. For more information on IDOT Context Sensitive Solutions guidelines, please visit their website at:

<http://www.dot.il.gov/css/home.html>

IDOT's goal is to make an improvement to IL Route 159 that improves safety and mobility for the traveling public, while seeking to preserve and enhance the scenic, economic, historic, and natural qualities of Collinsville. One of the tools IDOT will use to do this is intense public involvement. The project study team needs to hear from the public to understand the concerns and priorities of the community. Alternative designs can then be developed with these concerns in mind for input from the community.

## Public Involvement 101

IDOT's public involvement effort for this project will be conducted in three-3 steps.

1. The first step will be to reach out to as many stakeholders (users) as possible to identify concerns

and needs for the project. From this input and the engineering and environmental studies, the project study team will develop a formal purpose for the project. This purpose will address safety and mobility (IDOT's concerns) and concerns submitted by the public at-large.

2. After the purpose for the project has been established, the project study team will develop alternatives. These alternatives will focus on improving mobility and safety balanced with the needs of the community and environment. These alternatives will then be presented to the public for feedback.
3. Based on the feedback received during step two-2, the project study team will select an alternative that best meets the purpose and need of the project, reflecting to the extent possible the needs of the community and the environment. This solution will be presented to the public for additional feedback and further refinement.

## Where are we in the public involvement process?

The project study team is currently in step-1 of the public involvement process. The effort to date has been focused on getting as many people aware of and interested in the project as possible. This has been accomplished in a number of ways. The first of which was to build a mailing list of interested parties to keep people informed about the project. This mailing list was started utilizing a list of property owners along the project corridor. This list was supplemented by adding business owners (tenants) to the database. A project postcard was also developed and sent to the people on this list to make them aware that the project has started and to let them know about the project website. These postcards also help other interested parties get added to the project mailing list. In addition to the initial mailing, these postcards have been distributed in a number of ways including handing them out at Collinsville's Halloween Walk, providing them to businesses and government offices along the corridor, and providing them to organizations like churches or the American Legion for distribution to their membership. The project study team has also conducted a number of meetings with organizations or their leaders that have an interest in the project. These organizations range from the City, to the Collinsville Township Board, to City's

## Illinois Route 159 - Project Time Line



Economic Development Committee, to Downtown Collinsville, to churches, to the Historic Preservation Commission. The aforementioned list of organizations is not all inclusive, but simply a sampling of the organizations contacted. Each meeting was conducted to inform the organizations of the start of the project and to solicit their input. The input received to date ranges from concerns about safety at churches and schools, to the trees along Vandalia Street, to parking for downtown businesses, to concerns about personal property and impacts to existing businesses during and after construction. This list of concerns is not all inclusive, but the project team has received a number of questions repeatedly and developed answers to a number of frequently asked questions (FAQ). Additional questions may be found on the project website (please see the front page for the web address).



Additional step one-1 public involvement efforts include the project website (see page one for web address), the publication of this newsletter, the above pictured billboard, and a full scale public involvement meeting will be conducted on February 15, 2006.

## Why has the rest of IL Route 159 been improved to five-5 lanes and this section has not yet been completed?

When IL Route 159 was initially studied for improvements, the study limits were from Fairview Heights north to Edwardsville. During that study, it was determined that the improvement through Collinsville would be particularly challenging due to the limited right of way, proximity of homes and businesses to the roadway, and the concerns for protecting the downtown culture. Due to these many concerns, a consensus could not be reached on whether the existing alignment should be improved or a bypass should be constructed. Without a consensus on how to proceed, IDOT determined that the section through Collinsville should be completed as a stand alone project later and that is what is underway now.

## Upcoming Public Involvement Activities

- The project study team will conduct a full scale public information meeting on February 15, 2006. This meeting will be from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the American Legion Post 165 in Collinsville. The American Legion is located at 1022 Vandalia Street, Collinsville, IL 62234.
- Newsletters like this one will be published on approximately a quarterly basis. To be added to the mailing list please visit the project website (see page one).
- Additional meetings will be held with local organizations to keep them updated on the progress throughout the study. If you are part of an organization that may be interested in a project briefing, please contact Jason Watters at 618.632-7004 to schedule a time.

Do you or someone you know want to be added to our mailing list? Please complete the following form and mail it to:

IL Route 159 Project Team  
c/o Woolpert, Inc.  
343 Fountains Parkway, Suite 100  
Fairview Heights, IL 62208-2044

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Please check this box if you would like the newsletter emailed to you instead of standard mail.

## Contact Information

You may submit questions or comments about this project by writing us at:

IL Route 159 Project Team  
c/o Woolpert, Inc.  
343 Fountains Parkway, Suite 100  
Fairview Heights, IL 62208-2044

Or you may submit questions or comments on the project website at [www.dot.il.gov/ilroute159](http://www.dot.il.gov/ilroute159)

We look forward to seeing you at our first public information meeting on **February 15, 2006**.